Chicago and San Francisco, there are no comparable difficulties in rendering passport and visa services.

(iii) Passport and visa systems are being reviewed thoroughly to avoid possibility of harassment to genuine applicants.

Supreme court Judgement regarding status of staff artists

1537. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court in one of its judgements has held that the category of Staff Artists, i.e Announcers, News Readers, Musicians Producers were Government servants and were entitled to pensionary benefits;

(b) whether despite this judgement some staff artists have been given extension beyond the prescribed age;

(c) if so, the names of the persons concerned and the reasons for giving them extension; and

(d) in what manner the uniform policy for all categories of staff artists would be maintained in the matter of retirement and extension benefits?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): (a) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(b) to (d) Pending implementation of the Scheme prepared in pursuance of the Supreme Court's Judgement dated 25-4-1988, certain persons are continuing as Staff Artists and Artists. Extension can be granted by the Government to Staff Artists beyond the age of 58 years in exceptional and deserving cases on the basis of their performance, service records and programmes requirements. Retirement benefits and benefits of extension in service are given to Staff Artists/ Artsts as per existing instructions applicable to them.

Statement

The Government, in 1982, introduced a Scheme whereby the Staff Artists of All India Radio/Doordarshan were divided into two categories namely, 'Government Servants' and 'Artists' on the basis of options to be excercised by individual employees. However, this Scheme was challenged in the Supreme Court.

2. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its Judgement delivered on 25th April, 1988, reiterated that Staff Artists are Government Servants and directed the Government to review the entrire question covered by the 1982 Scheme and to prepare the fresh scheme in accordance with law having regard to the nature of the duties performed by each category of Staff Artists.

3. In pursuance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court's Judgement dated 25th April, 1988, a draft Scheme was prepard by the Government stating that the Staff Artists/Artists working in All India Radio and Doordarshan will be deemed as 'Government Servants. The draft scheme was submitted to the Hon'ble Supreme Court for approval.

4. The Hon'ble Supreme Court examined the draft scheme with reference to the petition No. 13636/ 83 of National Union of AIR Staff Artists and objections filed by the Union thereafter and also heard the arguments of both the Counsels and passed judgement on 5-4-1990. The hon'ble Court has directed the Government to constitute a High Powered Committee to examine the objections with reference to the terms of the Scheme and the final decision be taken by the Government within 6 months.